

Letter from Taizé

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The LETTER FROM TAIZÉ, in its new format, is published once every two months. To maintain its low subscription price (UK : £ 2.50 ; USA and Canada : \$ 5.00 ; Australia : 5.50 dollars), a challenge is offered to every reader: find 6 new subscribers for 1984.

After the European meeting in Paris, how to continue, without ever stopping, on a path of peace and reconciliation? How to enter into the preparation of the world meeting in 1985-86? At Easter in Taizé, we will be seeking out together some responses to these questions.

The worldwide pilgrimage of young people leads each person to make a specific commitment, for a determined length of time. The questions proposed in the "Letter from Haiti" in view of the world meetings, indicate a direction, and in the coming weeks before Easter, could foster reflection.

To begin to reflect more and more deeply on the "Letter from Haiti", either alone or in a group, here are some notes for the first of the two questions :



Rebours

How to find in God the creative energy for alleviating human suffering throughout the world ?

To commit oneself toward alleviating human suffering does not mean taking on alone the weight of an added effort. Our will is fragile, and we are often vulnerable to discouragement. How could we let our commitment rest on trust, not simply a human feeling of security, but a trust in "the continual presence of the Risen Lord"? The "Letter from Haiti" invites us to "turn toward Christ", to discover "his presence offered to every human being", the presence of the one "who descends for everyone to the lowest point of the human condition".

Putting our trust in Christ also means welcoming the trust he puts in us, to believe that there are creative energies hidden in us. Creative energies come from God and yet, through the mystery of Easter, he makes them take root in our human condition. Jesus prayed : "Not what I will but what you will" (Mt 26.39). He experienced the human desire to use one's vital forces to serve a personal project. Was his prayer then a rejection of his humanity? To the contrary : saying "what you will" was not to shut out human desires but to say "yes" to

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The meetings in Taizé take place around the community of brothers. Together with them, all participants gather three times daily for common prayer in the church. A stay in Taizé always means taking part in the prayers, meetings, meals, times of silence, and entering thus into the day's rhythm together. Upon arrival, everyone is invited to reflect on the following, about the meaning of the time he or she will be spending in Taizé :

Easter and the coming meetings in Taizé

[illegible]

Telephone :

Occupation :

Age :

Will participate in the meeting from to

Will bring my own tent : yes / no.

I have already been to Taizé : no / yes (date of last visit :)

Please send additional registration forms.

We can begin wherever we find ourselves, with the gifts and knowledge we have, "whether we belong to a Church movement or not, to a parish or congregation, a chaplaincy or some other church organization" (note 18 in the "Letter from Haiti"), "whether we work or not, are learning a trade or studying" (note 27). For one person, this may mean

You have come to Taizé to seek a meaning to your life. One of Christ's secrets is that he loved you first. There is the meaning of your life : to be loved for ever, to be clothed, as if by a garment, with God's forgiveness and trust. Then you can take the risk of giving your life.

It is good, if you can, to finish your week at Taizé in silence, either on Friday or Saturday."

Easter meeting : Holy Week, from April 15th to the 22nd, lets you follow day by day the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Other possible days of arrival are Thursday the 19th, Friday the 20th or Saturday April 21st.

For young people between 17 and 29 years of age, meetings are held every week throughout the year (arrival Sunday afternoon, departure the following Sunday at midday) and every weekend (from Friday evening to Sunday midday). Register in advance. For groups, wait to receive a reply which will contain practical information. Young people who can help with the welcome should

Young people who can *help with the welcome* should arrive on the Friday evening before the week they have chosen. Those who want to spend several weeks at Taizé should fix the length of their stay by corresponding with the welcome.

Costs : Everyone pays according to his or her possibilities and the value of their home country's currency. Suggested price per day for young English and Irish people : 20 - 26 FF. For young Americans : 26 - 32 FF. For adults : 45 - 75 FF. Those coming from outside of France should change money in advance before departure for Taizé.

Lodging (boys and girls separate) : in tents or dormitories. Bring blankets, sleeping bags and air mattresses. If possible, bring a tent.

It is useful to bring a *Bible* with you.

Silence and solitude : young people can always spend several days of silence and personal prayer at Taizé. *Those who are 15 or 16 years old* can participate in the Easter weekend. They can also come for the following weekends : March 2 to 6, March 30 to April 1, April 6 to 8, April 27 to May 1, May 31 to June 3, all the weekends of September, and November 1 to 4.

Adults (30 years and older) : because of limited accommodations, write in advance and wait for a reply.

Parents with children form a week-long group of discussion and sharing (arrival Monday, departure Sunday at midday), from Pentecost to September.

Children and elderly persons : Each week, from Holy Week until early November, thirty children, coming from families marked by separations, can be welcomed. From mid-November until Lent, those advancing in age are welcomed for a week. Write in advance and wait for a reply.

to alleviate the suffering of physical or mental illness. Those "who can or like to do manual work" may help others arrange their home in simple beauty (concern for housing is also urgent in certain parts of wealthier countries). Another person may want to gain the needed expertise to contribute in finding "new ways of food-production for the poorest regions of the world" (note 27).

The "commitments from Haiti" outline different possibilities for beginning right away. Which one can I take up right now? Toward what sort of commitment will this lead me?

In the next *Letter from Taizé*, we will continue this line of reflection, and take up the second question: "How can we become a ferment of trust and peace when so many events in and around us seem to stand in the way? How can we even build with such events?"

In a Haitian slum

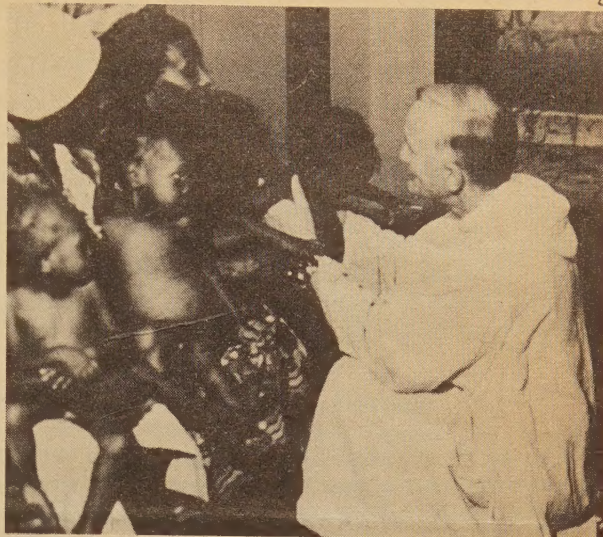
For several years, Haiti has been experiencing great population growth and slums have become more and more numerous. « Cité-Simone » is, in great part, built up on swamp areas and has already been inhabited for forty years, but it is over the last seventeen years that it has become more heavily populated. At that time, something happened which radically changed the lives of many people: several people decided to recuperate the land at the center of the city on which another slum had been built and set the houses there on fire. The people had to flee with the little they had left: wooden blanks, sheet metal. They left the city and went to the only place which remained: the swamps where few people before had dared venture.

Troubled by this turn of events, a priest went and committed himself there entirely, alongside the 100,000 inhabitants of the slum. For seventeen years, he has been with them, trying to find solutions, consoling, and listening.

After several years had passed, seven « Sisters of Charity » (of Saint Vincent de Paul), along with several others, joined the priest. With extraordinary energy, they established cooperatives, small schools (where there is a lack both of teachers and money to pay their salaries), a hospital, a shelter for mothers with sick children, a preventative medicine program, workshops, a cooperative for building fishing boats (twenty boats must be built right away). In a desperate situation, all these efforts can prepare the way for long-term change.

These few women do the impossible to find necessary aid, to convince others of need, and to obtain help. There is even more: they also go to the most deprived part of the slum, called « Brooklyn », and are like a radiant presence of God in a place where there is not only profound poverty but where there are also sub-human living conditions. In this part of the slum, you find a degrading misery that wears away the best of the human person. There are shacks squeezed one against the other, made of only a few old wooden planks and flattened cans. Canals filled with sticky, thick water pass between

It was in one of the poorest slums of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, that the "Letter from Haiti" was written in November-December 1983. Knowing



that Brother Roger wished to live in a particularly impoverished area, the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince himself suggested a place, a slum called "Cité-Simone".

the shacks. It is vital to find immediate solutions to all these many situations that seem without a way out. Shacks are needed for those who have no place to sleep. Women and children in great need must be fed each day. It is important to speak with the mothers without husbands who, in despair, no longer want to keep their child, preferring rather to give it away to anyone who will take it, to listen to and understand the woman who throws her child in the dirt, at a religious sister's feet.

It was in this, the most difficult part of the slum that a small shack was rented and where the « Letter from Haiti » was written.

The visit of Pope John Paul II last March and his words, « Something must change here », have been since then a kind of catalyst. The commitment of the bishops of Haiti, and their recent « Charter for human advancement » provide support for those who are seeking to give their lives in such difficult surroundings.

The Dominican Republic is on the same island as Haiti. Brother Roger and the brothers who were with him interrupted their stay in Haiti for several days in order to go also to Santo Domingo. The visit had been prepared ahead of time and the bishops had incorporated it in their pastoral work with young people. For ten years, close ties exist between the Church in Santo Domingo and Taizé. After the first celebration in the cathedral, there was each evening a prayer celebration in a different church of the capital. A small house in a poor area had been prepared to live in. Through these few days in Santo Domingo, Latin American young people were thus able also to join in the reflection for preparing the « Letter from Haiti ».

For five days, from December 28th to January 1st, the three biggest churches of Paris, Notre-Dame, Saint-Sulpice and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, housed the prayer of some 21,000 young people from all over Europe, and several thousand Parisians who welcomed them:

6,000 Italians, 5,000 Spaniards, 4,000 German-speaking people, 1,500 Yugoslavians, 250 Poles... In addition to the most commonly-spoken European languages, there were prayers said also in Croatian, Sloven, Russian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Basque, Finnish, Swedish, Dutch... There were also young people there from other continents.

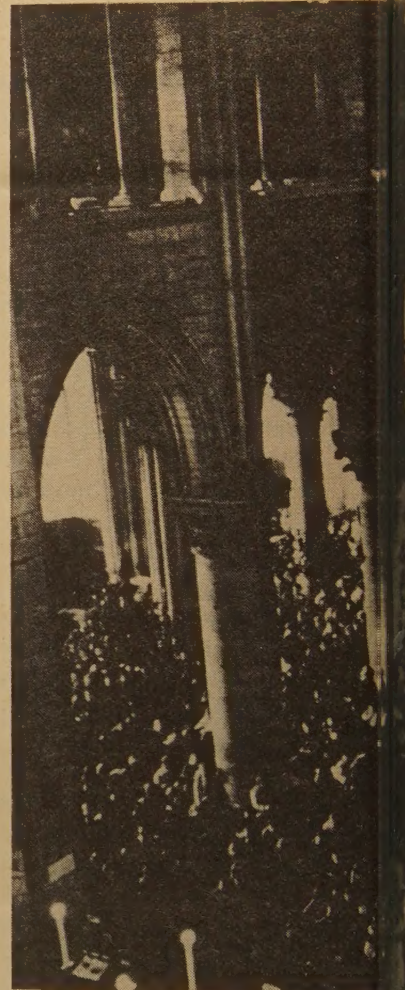
Seated even on the cathedral's stone floor

In a Notre-Dame without pomp, several tens of candles were flickering on the main altar. Together with the candles, there are only the brothers, kneeling in white robes, who emerge from the semi-darkness. Several thousand young people, crouching one against another, are seated, even on the stone floor, standing, praying in silence... Many have already met and recognize and greet one another in the metro, on the street, in the church: "What, you're here too... what's your name again... we met there". There, on the hill in Burgundy, where the adventure began.

This evening, in the three churches, 25,000 young people are praying, in vigil, as they do in Taizé. In Notre-Dame, they are mostly French, Spanish, German, Austrian: in Saint-Sulpice, Yugoslavian. Italian, Dutch, Portuguese: and in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Scandinavian and English.

Brother Roger stands up, and taking a small stool, turns to the crowd. With two translators at his sides, he begins to speak. The words "Haiti" (from which he has just returned), and "Calcutta" (he recently welcomed Mother Teresa) return again and again. Then taking a child by the hand, he heads toward a group of Polish people to offer them a gift. The Polish people, he says, are living "the first fruits of a springtime of the Church". There are 250 of them, coming from Katowice, Lublin, Wroclaw, Warsaw...

The Gospel reading of the baptism of Jesus is read by two young people. For a moment, it seems like everything is over, but suddenly, the choir and assembly take up again in song: "O Lord hear my prayer, when I call, answer me..." And then "Dona nobis pacem, Domine..." Many remain in the church, where there are times of singing and of silence, seated, praying to God, to sustain this astonishing love which He has put in our hearts.



Finding a way forward

In this time when societies are going from one crisis to another at an ever-accelerating rate, the Churches too are shaken. They are experiencing the subtle illness of broken-ness and fragmentation. Moreover, there are accusations between Christians which are at times so severe that they make people want to run away.

Twenty-five years ago, when he announced the convening of the Second Vatican Council, John XXIII offered an answer. On January 25, 1959, he said: "Let us not seek to know who was wrong or who was right, but let us be reconciled".

During the Second Vatican Council, there was fine hope for reconciliation between the Churches. However, since then, it's become clear that such a

reconciliation will come about only in the distant future. There is a spirit of unity among many Church leaders, and also new understandings, friendships, and remarkable theological texts. But that is not yet reconciliation.

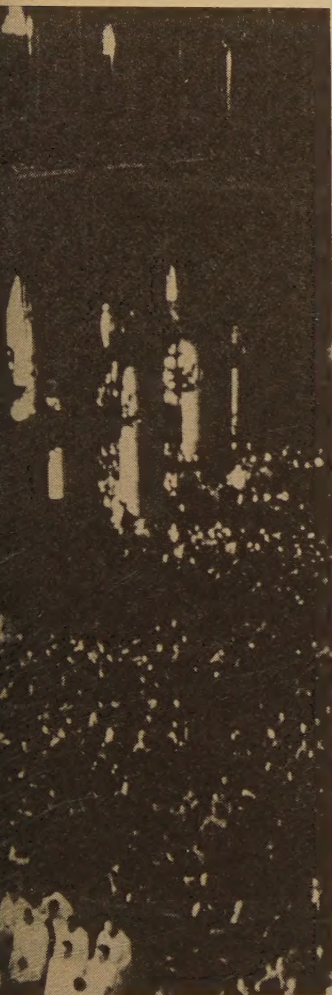
Faced with such impossibilities, it is better to seek a way out of the impasse than to maintain illusory hopes. In a period of transition, what there offers a path of reconciliation? Such a path exists. Clearly it does not involve seeking what is easiest, but means having one faith, one mind and one hope. I would like to describe briefly this possibility.

The path offered us is one of reconciliation within oneself, without becoming a "sign of rejection of one's origins". What matters is to reconcile within

ING IN PARIS

tant Churches of Paris also participated in one of the celebrations.

The following are two accounts of the European meeting, one by a journalist and the other by a participant who was in one of the 200 parishes in Paris where there were morning meetings and where the young people were living.



self "the thirst for the Word of God loved in the depths of the protestant Churches" and "the treasures of faith of the holy Orthodox Churches", with the charisms of the Catholic Church, all of this while preparing oneself, day after day, to put his life in its common faith.

In this period of history when we are experiencing various separations, Christ, in the communion of his body, is forsaken as rarely before. Many seek him, and yet without this unique communion in his body which is the Church. If there were not such abandonment of Christ, we, my brothers and I, could not use so much energy to bring young people together, not only in Taizé but also elsewhere throughout western and eastern Europe, in order

A telegram from Pope John Paul II

The Holy Father remembers with joy your prayer gatherings at the venerated place of the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul. He encourages wholeheartedly the young people from different European countries, stimulated by their friends of Taizé, to continue in their experience of church prayer and fraternal exchange in the parishes of Paris. May they thus be, more and more, witnesses in this world to the love of the Gospel which goes beyond boundaries, and ferments of trust, being assured that true peace flows from a heart made new. The pope prays that the Savior may strengthen the gifts of the Holy Spirit in you all, make your involvement in church life grow, and fill you with his joy.

Paris welcomes Europe

Many people — even those with small, modest homes — welcomed the young people in Paris, giving them a place to sleep. Others brought small snacks for them when they arrived. Others still helped prepare a meal, on January 1st, for those who were not staying with families.

In the neighborhood where we were welcomed, we spent three mornings discovering signs of hope and places of suffering. The "tenth arrondissement" is a working neighborhood, very much affected by the presence of two train stations, the "gare du Nord" and the "gare de l'Est". Unemployment affects many families. There are many immigrants who live here. There were 160 of us; welcomed by the parish of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul: 50 Italians, 30 Irish, 20 Spaniards, 30 Germans and Austrians, 10 English, some Yugoslavians, several Finns. A cross-roads of different languages and cultures! When one knows for example the difficult conditions of Italian immigrants living in Germany, you know how much sharing between young Italians and Germans can mean.

One morning, after prayer in the crypt of the parish church, we split up into three groups. The first group went to visit with a mother who day after day animates the parish

office of social aid. Together with several others, she welcomes the poor of the neighborhood, both older and younger people marked by misery. The number of those "living on the street", she confided to us, has risen dramatically these last few years. The second group spoke with several people in the neighborhood who struggle for an end to torture and human rights' violations throughout the world. One woman, a political exile from Uruguay, where her son has disappeared, spoke about the imprisonments she and her friends had to go through because of their commitment to the very poorest. The third group was received in a tiny apartment where several religious sisters live, welcoming young prostitutes. With the two train stations nearby, there is much prostitution. In this tiny apartment, we saw a kind of reflection of a passage from the *Letter from Haiti*: "As small as it may be, your home can be a place of trust, peace and serene joy, a source of compassion in the midst of daily life."

In the afternoon, some of us went to spend time at the orthodox church, Saint Sergius, which was a place for silence open to everyone during the European meeting. The others went to the regional meetings. I thus found myself at the reformed church of the Holy Spirit, to speak with others about continuity after the Paris meeting...

to go to the sources of prayer, to make the earth habitable through a more just sharing of material goods, to alleviate human suffering and discover paths of reconciliation.

As a young person, or a child, will you take the risk, at the Gospel's invitation, to go two by two to seek reconciliation among all people? When reconciliation is refused, do not abandon yourself to torment... sing Christ until serene joy.

When the Church becomes a ferment of peace and trust in the entire human family, both for believers and non-believers, it makes us people who are not half-dead, but people who are reconciled, fully alive, and clothed with forgiveness as if by a garment of serene joy.

Brother Roger

This appeal was written in a first version for the end of the European meeting and then re-written afterward.

Thu 1 Jesus said to his disciples : For you, who am I ? Peter answered : The Christ of God. Job 23,1-10a ; Lk 9,18-22

Fri 2 Jesus said : Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny himself, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. 1 Co 3,18-23 ; Lk 9,23-27

Sat 3 Jesus said : Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. 1 Co 5,6b-8 ; John 14,23-27

SUN 4 Jesus said : It is not by crying out, Lord, Lord, that you will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but rather by doing the will of my Father. Rm 3,21-28 ; Mt 7,21-27

Mon 5 Paul wrote : May we be regarded as servants of Christ to whom the mysteries of God have been entrusted. 1 Co 4,1-5 ; Lk 9,37-43a

Tue 6 Job said to God : I had heard of you by word of mouth, but now I have seen you with my eyes. Job 42,1-8a ; Lk 9,43b-45

Wed 7 ASH WEDNESDAY
Jesus said : When you fast, groom your head and wash your face so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who is there and sees what is done in secret. 2 Co 5,20-6,2 ; Mt 6,1-6.16-18

Thu 8 Thus says the Lord : Seek me and you will live. Amos 5,4.14-15 ; Lk 9,46-48

Fri 9 God said : I set before you life and blessing, death and destruction. So choose life. Dt 30,15-20 ; Lk 9,49-50

Sat 10 Paul wrote : God is faithful ; he will not let you be tested beyond your strength. Lk 9,51-56 ; 1 Co 10,13

SUN 11 Paul wrote : The righteous act of one man, Jesus Christ, makes all people just and gives them life. Rm 5,17-19 ; Mt 4,1-11

Mon 12 Jesus said : Whoever puts his hand to the plow and looks back is unworthy of the kingdom of God. Jr 1,4-9 ; Luke 9,57-62

Tue 13 The Lord said to Jeremiah : I watch over my word in order to fulfill it. Jr 1,11-12 ; Lk 10,1-3

Wed 14 The Lord said to Jeremiah : They will fight against you, but to no avail, for I am with you to deliver you. Jr 1,17-19 ; Lk 10,4-11.16

Thu 15 Paul wrote : Is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ ? Since there is one loaf, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1 Co 10,16-17 ; Lk 10,17-20

Fri 16 God said : My people have abandoned me, the source of living water, to dig themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water. Jr 2,9-13 ; Lk 10,21-24

Sat 17 Paul wrote : Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. Lk 10,25-28 ; 1 Co 10,31-11,1

SUN 18 As Jesus was standing before Peter, James and his brother John, he was transfigured : his face became as dazzling as the sun, his clothes as radiant as light. 2 Tm 1,8-10 ; Mt 17,1-9

Mon 19 After having spoken to our fathers at various times and in varied forms through the prophets, God has spoken to us, in these days which are the last, through his Son. Hebrews 1,1-6 ; Lk 10,29-37

Tue 20 Jesus said to Martha : You are worried and upset about many things, where few are needed, in fact only one. Jr 6,14.16a ; Lk 10,38-42

Wed 21 Because he himself suffered temptation, Jesus is able to help those who are now being tempted. Heb 2,10-15.17-18 ; Lk 11,1-4

Thu 22 Thus says the Lord : This is all that I command you : Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people. In all things follow the way that I show to you for your good. Jr 7,21-25 ; Lk 11,5-8

Fri 23 Jesus said : Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. Heb 4,12-16 ; Lk 11,9-13

Sat 24 In the hope offered to us, we have an anchor for our soul, sure as it is firm. Luke 11,14-20 ; Hebrews 6,18b-20a

SUN 25 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman : If you knew the gift of God and who it is asking for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. Rm 5,1-2.5-8 ; John 4,5-14.21-24

Mon 26 During the days of his life on earth, Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and God heard him. Heb 5,5-9 ; Lk 11,23.27-28

Tue 27 Jesus said : No-one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. Heb 6,9-12 ; Lk 11,33-41

Wed 28 Jeremiah prayed : You know me, O Lord, you see me and you test my heart which is with you. Jr 11,19 ; 12,1-3a ; Lk 12,1-4

Thu 29 Jesus said : Do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time all that should be said. Heb 8,6-12 ; Lk 12,6-8.11-12

Fri 30 Jesus said : Be on guard against all kinds of greed. One may be wealthy, but it is not that on which one's life depends. Heb 9,11-12.14-15 ; Lk 12,31-21

Sat 31 Jeremiah prayed : Your word is the delight and joy of my heart. Jr 15,11.15-21 ; Lk 12,22-31

The Bible text proposed for each day one used in the midday prayer at Taizé is short enough to be learned by heart over several times during the day. These references give the daily readings used in the morning and evening prayers at Taizé. The reference in italics is the one from which the text for midday is taken).

Bible Readings : Meditating on the Word

APRIL 1984

SUN 1 Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. (Ephesians 5.8-14 ; John 9.13-17,35-38)

Mon 2 Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is in him. (Jeremiah 17.7-8 ; Luke 12.32-34)

Tue 3 The Holy Spirit assures us of this : I will write my laws on their hearts and on their minds. Their sins and offences I will remember no more. (Heb 10.14-18 ; Luke 12.35-44)

Wed 4 Jesus said : I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled. (Jer 18.1-6 ; Luke 12.49-52)

Thu 5 Jesus said to the crowd : When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say : it's going to rain, and it does. How is it that you don't know how to interpret the present time ? (Heb 10.32-38a ; Luke 12.54-59)



Faith is being sure of what we hope and certain of what we do not see. (11.1-6; Luke 13.6-9)

Jesus said to Peter : I have prayed that your faith may not fail, and once you have believed to me, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22.24-32; Heb 12.1-4)

The Lord says : I will put my spirit upon you and you will live. (Isaiah 37.12-14; John 11.32-44)

By faith, Abraham obeyed the call to go to a place he would later receive as inheritance, and he went even though he did not know where he was going. (Heb 11.8-16; John 2.13-22)

God said to his Servant : I have made you a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind and to release from prison those who sit in darkness. (Isaiah 2.5-7; John 3.13-17)

Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. (Heb 11.35-12.2; John 10.11-18)

Jesus said : Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. (Isaiah 50.4-9a; John 12.20-26)

He carried our sorrows and he bore our sufferings. We considered him stricken by God and humiliated, yet he was wounded by our sins. (Isaiah 52.13-53.5; John 12.27-36)

Before his death, Jesus said to his disciples : Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no-one will take away your joy. (Isaiah 53.6-12; John 16.16-22)

SUN 15 PALM SUNDAY

Being made in human likeness, and found in appearance as a man, Christ humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross. (Philippians 2.5-11; Matthew 21.1-11)

In Gethsemane, Jesus fell with his face to the ground and prayed : My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. (Matthew 26.30-46; Mt 26.47-75)

Tue 17 On the day Christ was crucified, from midday to three o'clock, darkness came over all the land. Then Jesus cried out in a loud voice : My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ?

(Mt 27.11-36; Mt 27.35-61)

Wed 18 While on the cross, Jesus prayed : Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

(Luke 23.33-49; John 18.1-27)

Thu 19 MAUNDY-THURSDAY

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

(1 Corinthians 11.23-26; John 13.1-15)

Fri 20 GOOD FRIDAY

When Jesus, on the cross, saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to his mother : Woman, here is your son, and to the disciple : Here is your mother.

(John 19.1-18; John 19.17-42)

Sat 21 HOLY SATURDAY

Put to death in the body and made alive by the Spirit, Christ went and proclaimed his message to the prisoners of death.

(1 Peter 3.18-22; Job 19.25-27)

SUN 22 RESURRECTION SUNDAY

You have been raised with Christ, so set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

(Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-10)

Mon 23 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

(Isaiah 12.2-6; John 21.15-25)

Tue 24 The Lord removes the shroud that enfolds all peoples ; he swallows up death for ever. (Isaiah 25.7-9; Mark 16.1-8)

Wed 25 SAINT MARK, EVANGELIST

Jesus said to his disciples : Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation. (Acts 2.31-33a; Mark 16.14-20)

Thu 26 Jesus said : Unless one is born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (1 P 1.6-12; John 3.1-8)

Fri 27 Peter said : Change your hearts and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshment may come from the Lord.

(Acts 3.17-21; John 20.11-18)

Sat 28 Who could condemn us? Christ Jesus died for us — more than that, he is risen and is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. (John 20.19-23; Romans 8.31-34)

SUN 29 All the believers held everything in common. They praised God and enjoyed the favour of all the people.

(Acts 2.42-47; John 20.24-31)

Mon 30 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman : If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. (1 P 1.17-21; John 4.1-10)

LAPLAND, Finland. — Kolari, January 1, 1984 : During the time between Christmas and the New Year, 300 young people gathered from the different parts of Lapland, coming to pray and reflect together on the theme of forgiveness, in communion with the European meeting in Paris. Meanwhile, other Finnish young people went to Paris, with others from Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In November and December, four brothers of the community had travelled on pilgrimage through the four Scandinavian countries, going from place to place, meeting to meeting, with an icon of the cross and of the resurrection. Now, at the very beginning of the new year, the icon of the cross has arrived here in Kolari, while the icon of the resurrection is presently in Norway. Young people will continue during the coming months to take the cross from one place to another in Scandinavia, crossing the countries' borders as often as possible.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA. — New York, February 15, 1984 : Three brothers of Taizé, who live normally in a poor neighborhood in Manhattan, at the center of New York, will be travelling until Easter to continue the pilgrimage of peace and reconciliation begun in North America in 1983. Passing from west to east, from south to north, the pilgrimage will move through twelve cities during the time of Lent, like a "way of the cross" lived out with young and older people who want to become a ferment of trust and peace, a witness of Easter while living in the midst of human distress. In 1983, the pilgrimage already passed through twenty-five other cities of the United States and Canada over eighteen weeks. Here is just one account coming from the pilgrimage :

"We spent one week in Gaspésie, a region located to the east of Quebec. Those who welcomed us had prepared our visit well. They had chosen ten parishes as steps along the pilgrimage, places where reconciliation seemed either to be an already-present reality or something essential to bring about. Before we had even arrived, some young people had already conceived of ways for continuing afterwards, over a period of two years, so that they 'never stop'. They said, 'Pilgrimage marks and makes up the vocation which belongs to the people of God'".

One of the steps along our pilgrimage had been planned for a reservation of Micmac Indians, at Restigouche. The Indians there are very poor, living above all from the fish they catch. They alone have the right to catch the salmon which return upstream. And yet two years ago, the government tried to reduce some of their rights, an act which provoked conflict and even violence between young Indians and whites. Still today, there is great distrust between the Indians and whites. At the reservation we were welcomed by the former chief of the tribe, a man with a great laugh who explained very freely the Indians' difficulties. We visited homes, and also went to visit a 98 year-old woman. When evening came, we animated a prayer celebration in their church which ended with a prayer around the cross. The church was packed; many whites from neighboring villages had come, the first contact between the two racial communities since the events two years ago. After

the prayer, the Indians invited everyone for a small celebration, during which the children danced traditional dances. The following day, we were told that such an evening, with reconciliation visible between Indians and whites, would have been nearly unimaginable, "a kind of miracle", one person said."

NORTHERN IRELAND. — Londonderry, December 21, 1983 : "To prepare ourselves for the meeting in Paris, we had prayer in the two cathedrals, Protestant and Catholic, one after the other. The Catholic and Anglican bishops came to the two cathedrals to pray with us; and the cross was carried by youth from one church to another. In the midst of such a difficult situation here in our country, the words of St. Paul were brought to mind in a concrete, living way : "Christ is our peace, he has made the two peoples one and has destroyed the barrier which divided them. He has reconciled them with God by the cross. In his body, he put hostility to death" (Eph 2)."

News from North to South

FRANCE. — In Grenoble, during this time following the European meeting in Paris, there will be a meeting of prayer and sharing for the entire surrounding region taking place from March 16th to 18th. Since January, several brothers have been participating in the preparations for the gathering. How can we make this "small pilgrimage" of several weeks the search for an even greater communion? Many people of the region, in parishes, movements and youth groups, have been reflecting about this question. Two prayers with brother Roger will be taking place in the presence of Mgr. Matagrín, bishop of Grenoble.

ITALY. — Rome, December 27, 1983 : Near the end of the afternoon, beneath the vaulted cathedral roof of Saint John Lateran, you can hear meditative songs being sung. There is a prayerful atmosphere, in spite of the imminent departure of twelve buses for Paris. Families and friends came to gather round the 700 young people, from sixty parishes of Rome, as they prayed before their departure for the Paris meeting. The large cross which had been on pilgrimage was put standing on the altar. The crowd sang, "Dona la pace, Signore, a chi confida in te". During the prayer, Cardinal Poletti, the pope's vicar for the city of Rome, entrusted the young Romans with the following message, for all the young Europeans gathered in Paris :

"The Church of God which is in Rome had the joy last year of welcoming for several days many who are among you, from different countries of Europe. It was a time of intense prayer, for witnessing together that Jesus Christ, the friend of humanity, is God, that he alone builds a sure peace, that in him alone people can recognize one another as brothers and live together in friendship. The Church of Rome, with its bishop, Pope John Paul II, is spiritually united with you, and greets you with

joy. It participates with you as you with to unity in faith in Christ.

Seven hundred young Romans are bring this message of friendship to you. Together with you, they wish to be bearers of beautiful commitment which is to open doors to Jesus Christ, Lord of peace, in a world threatened by war. With friendship, the name of the Pope, his vicar for Rome greets you."

CONGO. — Pointe-Noire, late February 1984 : After three months in Zaire, and one month in Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo, a Belgian couple has just recently arrived in Pointe-Noire, the second largest city of the Congo. For Easter they will be visiting Cameroon. Having left from Taizé last October, they are now visiting young Africans, to share their daily lives, listen to them, to discover the life of the Church in Africa, and to try to help them how to set out on small steps towards each country, along the worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation :

"We have been invited often to the homes of people of very modest means. And we have seen to what extent our presence as young Europeans living among them in a simple way can be a sign of God, God who does not want a divided world. In the end, it's those who show us the meaning of our being here. We've found many young people who have been following for a long time the searching place in relation with Taizé. We've understood that this time of reflection is, at the moment, in Europe, a kind of force moving us towards awareness of our place within the Church, and it is clear that the parish is the place where commitment takes place. Lay ministry is becoming more and more important and young people have a large part in it. We have been struck by the questions they ask about their parish : How do you organize pastoral work in your home parish? How do you prepare your celebrations?"

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